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FORBIDDEN TALES OF
DARK MANSION
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FORBIDDEN TALES OF DARK MANSION
NO. 9
FEB.
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DID THE WITCH DOCTOR'S MAGIC WORK... AM I BEAUTIFUL?

YOU THERE! DON'T BE TIMID! COME INTO THE DARK MANSION! WE ALWAYS WELCOME VISITORS HERE!
STEP ACROSS THE THRESHOLD! I PROMISE YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO REGRET IT!
AND LISTEN TO THE TALES I'VE CHOSEN JUST FOR YOU...THE KIND YOU'LL ONLY FIND IN THE DARK MANSION!
J-1956

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THE FOUL CREATURE THAT DONOVAN HAD SUMMONED FROM THE PIT DID ONLY AS HE WAS ORDERED TO DO. IF DONOVAN'S REWARD WAS AGONY AND DESPAIR, HOW COULD THAT BE BLAMED ON..
DONOVAN'S DEMON
NO! GO BACK! BACK TO THE HELL YOU CAME FROM! GO BACK!
BACK? IT IS TOO LATE FOR TURNING BACK! YOU COMMANDED ME! NOW - I MUST OBEY!
STORY: JACK OLECK
ART: JESS RAMOS
THE IRONY OF IT ALL WAS THAT IT WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED IF DONOVAN'S WIFE HAD NOT BEEN WHAT SHE WAS. BECAUSE WHAT HE DID, HE DID FOR HER.
WALTER! HE'S AT HIS RIDICULOUS ALTAR AGAIN. THE FOOL!
IT WAS IRONIC BECAUSE AT THE BEGINNING DONOVAN DID NOT REALLY KNOW THE SOUL OF THE WOMAN HE HAD MARRIED..
WALTER - OH, WALTER, YOU PROMISED! YOU SAID YOU'D GIVE UP ALL THIS HOCUS-POCUS!
I-I KNOW. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU BACK SO SOON. BUT, CORA, DON'T BE ANGRY. IT-IT'S THE ONLY WAY...
DON'T YOU SEE?
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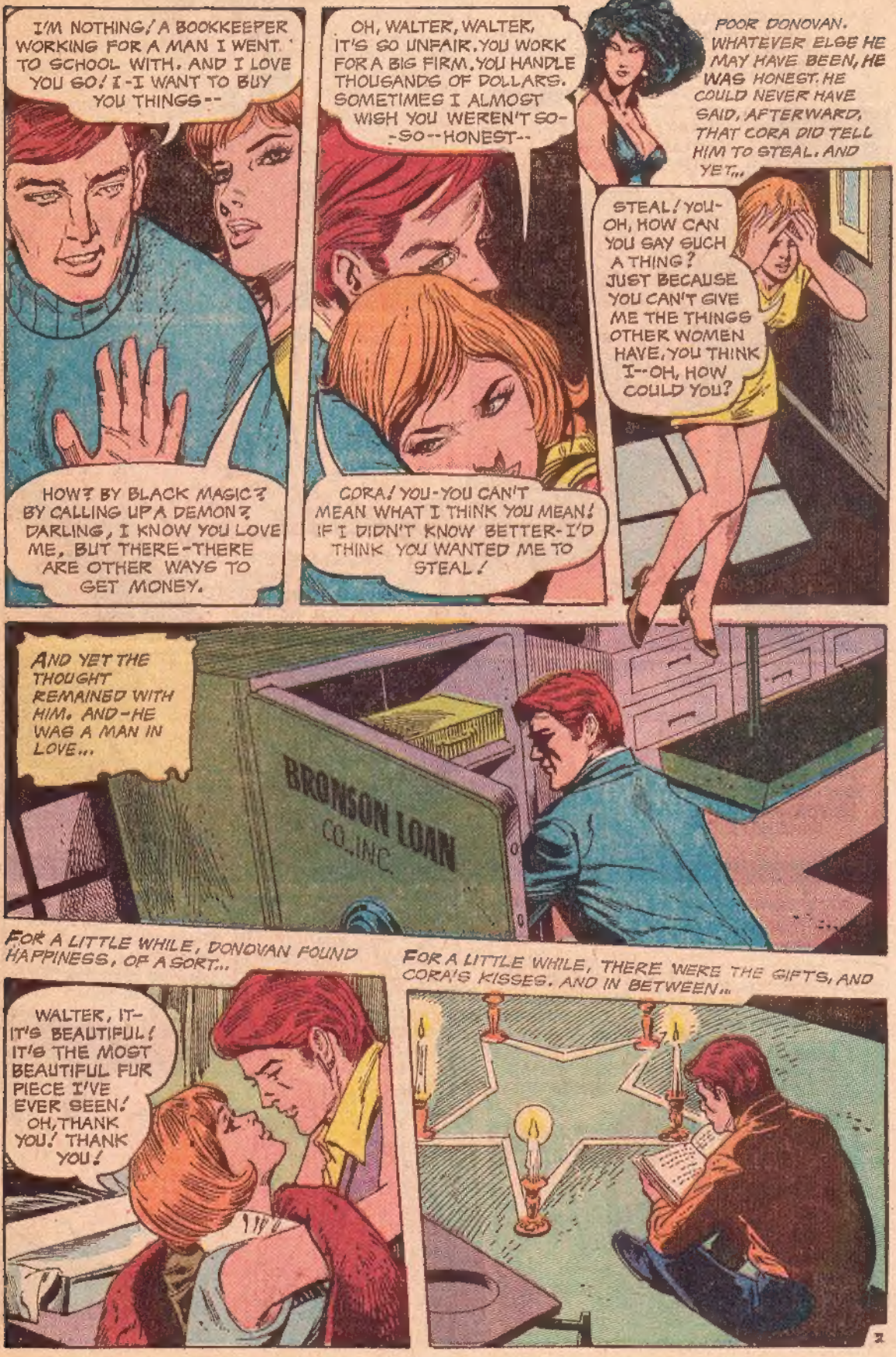
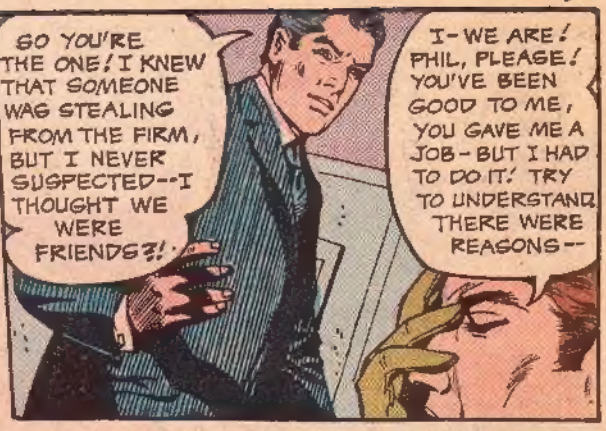

I'M NOTHING, A BOOKKEEPER WORKING FOR A MAN I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH. AND I LOVE YOU SO! I-I WANT TO BUY YOU THINGS--
HOW? BY BLACK MAGIC? BY CALLING UP A DEMON? DARLING, I KNOW YOU LOVE ME, BUT THERE-THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET MONEY.
OH, WALTER, WALTER, IT'S SO UNFAIR. YOU WORK FOR A BIG FIRM. YOU HANDLE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS. SOMETIMES I ALMOST WISH YOU WEREN'T SO--SO--HONEST--
CORA! YOU-YOU CAN'T MEAN WHAT I THINK YOU MEAN! IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER-I'D THINK YOU WANTED ME TO STEAL!
POOR DONOVAN. WHATEVER ELSE HE MAY HAVE BEEN, HE WAS HONEST. HE COULD NEVER HAVE SAID, AFTERWARD, THAT CORA DID TELL HIM TO STEAL. AND YET...
STEAL! YOU-OH, HOW CAN YOU SAY SUCH A THING? JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN'T GIVE ME THE THINGS OTHER WOMEN HAVE, YOU THINK I--OH, HOW COULD YOU?
AND YET THE THOUGHT REMAINED WITH HIM. AND-HE WAS A MAN IN LOVE...
BRONSON LOAN CO., INC.
FOR A LITTLE WHILE, DONOVAN FOUND HAPPINESS, OF A SORT...
WALTER, IT-IT'S BEAUTIFUL! IT'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL FUR PIECE I'VE EVER SEEN! OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
FOR A LITTLE WHILE, THERE WERE THE GIFTS, AND CORA'S KISSES. AND IN BETWEEN...

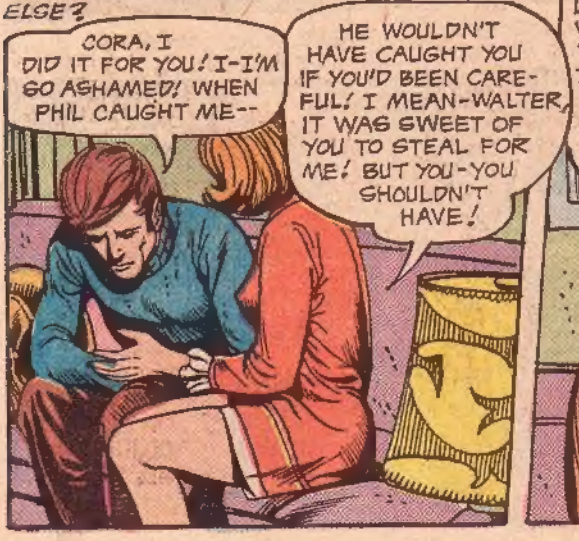
IN BETWEEN—DONAVAN CALLED UPON STILL POWERS OF DARKNESS. HE HOPED—AND WENT ON TRYING TO SATISFY A WIFE WHO COULD NEVER BE SATISFIED. AND THE RESULT WAS INEVITABLE.

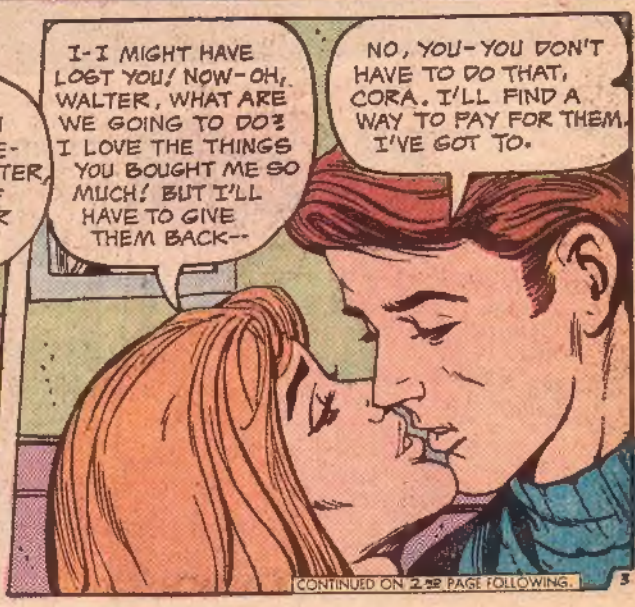

SO YOU'RE THE ONE! I KNEW THAT SOMEONE WAS STEALING FROM THE FIRM, BUT I NEVER SUSPECTED—I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS?!
I—WE ARE! PHIL, PLEASE! YOU'VE BEEN GOOD TO ME, YOU GAVE ME A JOB—BUT I HAD TO DO IT! TRY TO UNDERSTAND THERE WERE REASONS—

NO! DON'T TELL ME! I DON'T WANT TO KNOW YOUR REASONS! I—I'D RATHER FORGET WHAT I JUST SAW!
FORGET—THEN—YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE ME ARRESTED? YOU'RE NOT—

NO, WALTER. WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS, OUR WIVES ARE FRIENDS—NO, I WON'T HAVE YOU ARRESTED. WE'LL FORGET THIS. BUT ON ONE CONDITION. YOUR WORD THAT IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. DO I HAVE IT?

HAVE IT? DONOVAN SWORE. OF COURSE HE DID. AND THEN HE FLED. TO CORA. WHERE ELSE?


CORA, I DID IT FOR YOU! I—I'M SO ASHAMED! WHEN PHIL CAUGHT ME—
HE WOULDN'T HAVE CAUGHT YOU IF YOU'D BEEN CAREFUL! I MEAN—WALTER, IT WAS SWEET OF YOU TO STEAL FOR ME! BUT YOU—YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE!


I—I MIGHT HAVE LOST YOU! NOW—OH, WALTER, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? I LOVE THE THINGS YOU BOUGHT ME SO MUCH! BUT I'LL HAVE TO GIVE THEM BACK—
NO, YOU—YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT, CORA. I'LL FIND A WAY TO PAY FOR THEM. I'VE GOT TO.

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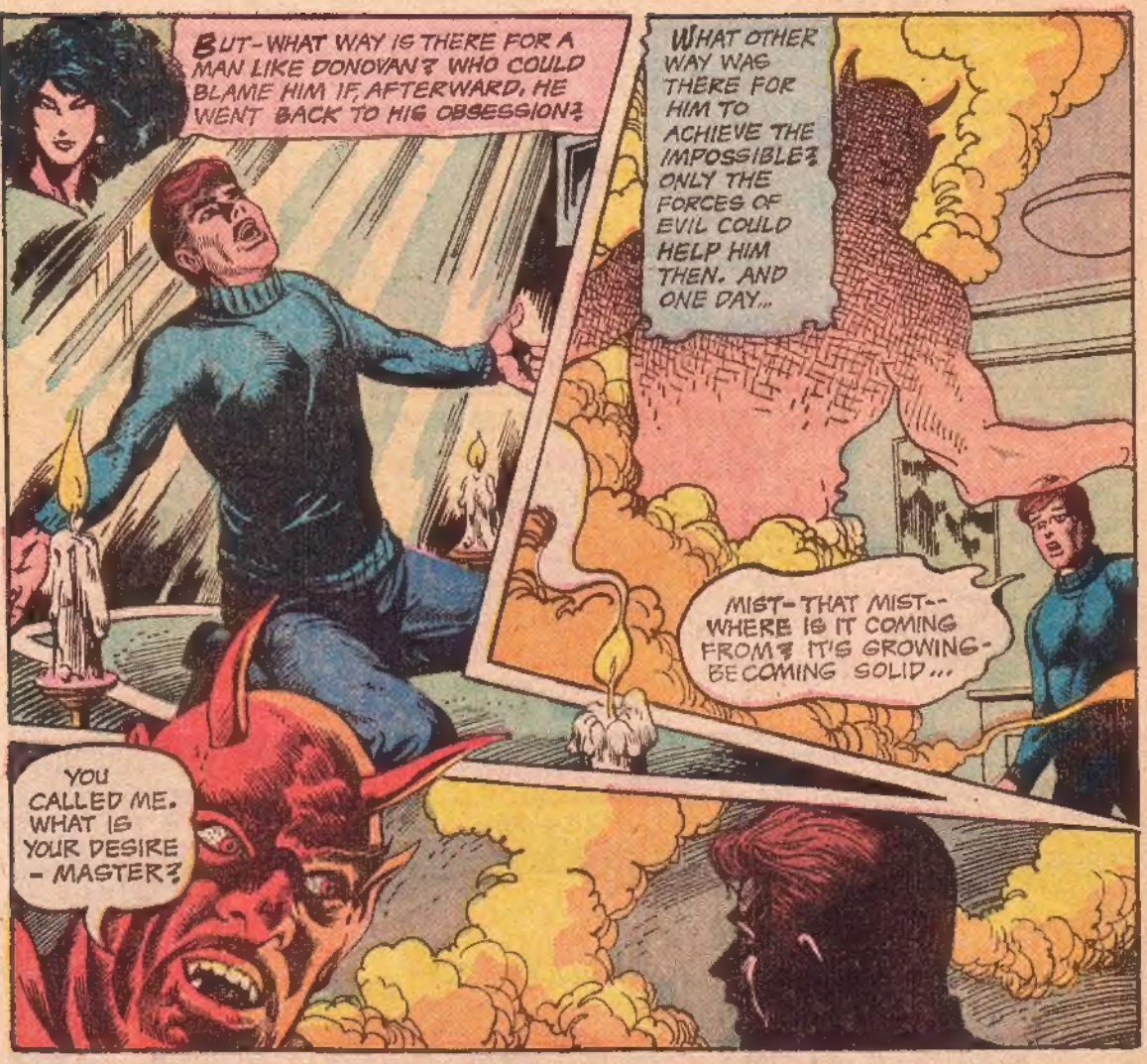
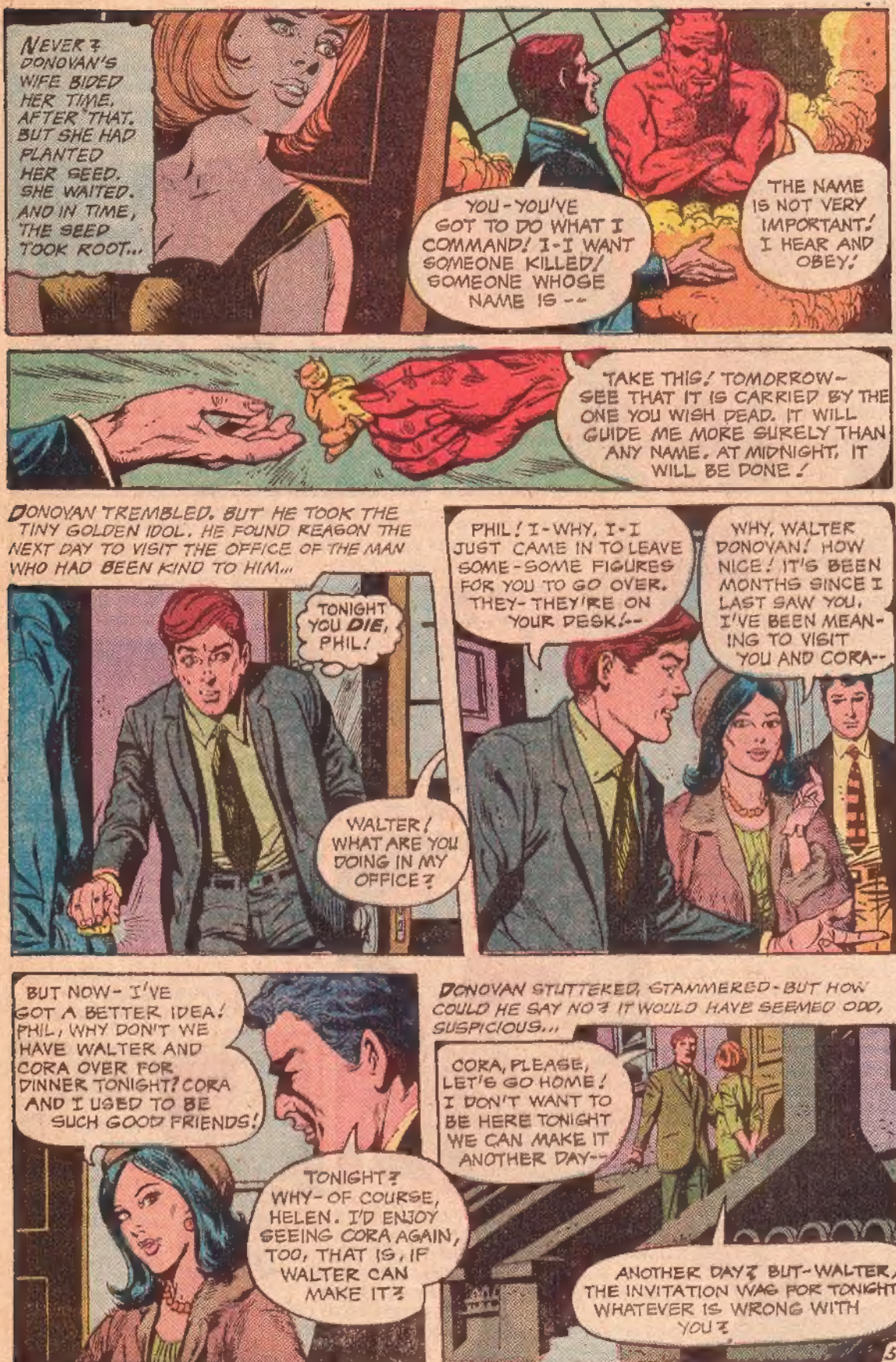

BUT-WHAT WAY IS THERE FOR A MAN LIKE DONOVAN? WHO COULD BLAME HIM IF, AFTERWARD, HE WENT BACK TO HIS OBSESSION?
WHAT OTHER WAY WAS THERE FOR HIM TO ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE? ONLY THE FORCES OF EVIL COULD HELP HIM THEN. AND ONE DAY...
MIST-THAT MIST--WHERE IS IT COMING FROM? IT'S GROWING-BECOMING SOLID...
YOU CALLED ME. WHAT IS YOUR DESIRE - MASTER?

AT FIRST, DONOVAN KNEW ONLY TERROR! QUAVERING, HE ORDERED THE DEMON BACK TO WHERE IT COME FROM! HE HAD TO THINK! BUT AFTERWARD...

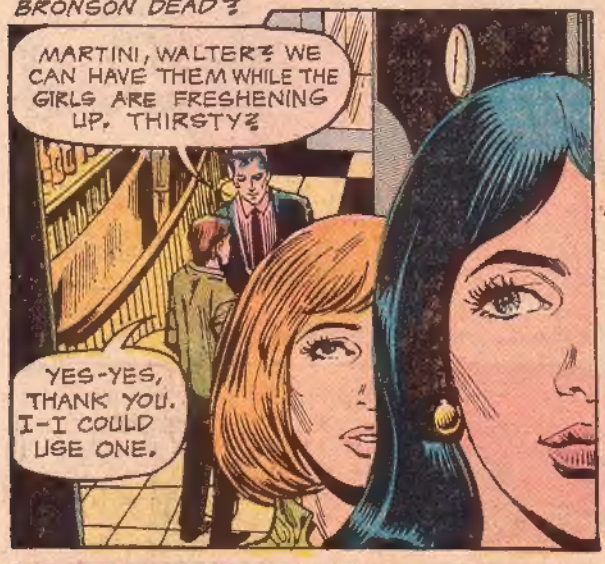
CORA, WE-WE CAN HAVE ANYTHING! I KNOW I PROMISED-BUT I HAD TO GO ON! AND I'VE DONE IT! I'VE RAISED A DEMON! WE CAN HAVE ANYTHING--
YOU MEAN-YOU REALLY SUCCEEDED? THEN-WE CAN BE RICH! FREE! WE CAN HAVE WHATEVER WE WANT, GO WHERE WE WANT--

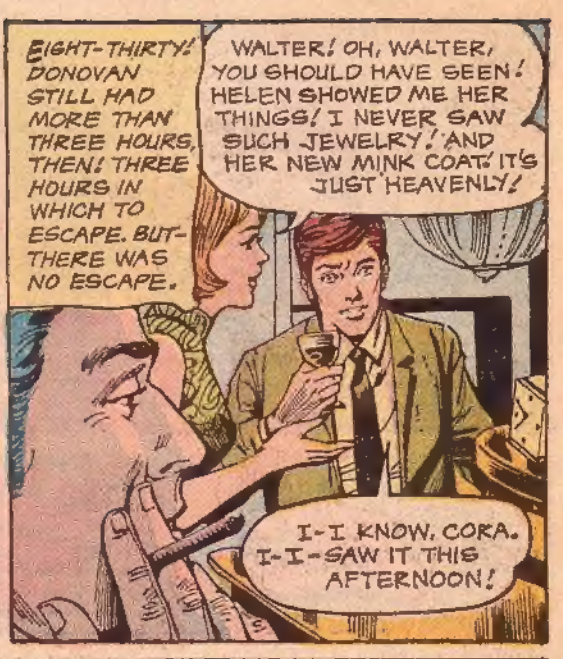
YES! EXCEPT FOR-PHIL! CORA, WHAT ABOUT PHIL? IF HE DECIDES TO PROSECUTE ME--
PHIL? YES-YOU'RE RIGHT! I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT PHIL! WE COULD NEVER REST EASY--WALTER, WE CAN'T LIVE LIKE THAT! WE--IT'S NOT FAIR! I-I ALMOST WISH YOU'D TELL THE DEMON TO GET RID OF PHIL! I—

CORA! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT WOULD BE MURDER! YOU CAN'T MEAN IT!
NO, OF-OF COURSE I DIDN'T! WALTER, FORGET WHAT I SAID! IT-IT JUST SLIPPED OUT! I COULD NEVER ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT! NEVER!


NEVER? DONOVAN'S WIFE BIDED HER TIME. AFTER THAT. BUT SHE HAD PLANTED HER SEED. SHE WAITED. AND IN TIME, THE SEED TOOK ROOT...
YOU-YOU'VE GOT TO DO WHAT I COMMAND! I-I WANT SOMEONE KILLED! SOMEONE WHOSE NAME IS --
THE NAME IS NOT VERY IMPORTANT! I HEAR AND OBEY!
TAKE THIS! TOMORROW-SEE THAT IT IS CARRIED BY THE ONE YOU WISH DEAD. IT WILL GUIDE ME MORE SURELY THAN ANY NAME. AT MIDNIGHT, IT WILL BE DONE!
DONOVAN TREMBLED. BUT HE TOOK THE TINY GOLDEN IDOL. HE FOUND REAGON THE NEXT DAY TO VISIT THE OFFICE OF THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN KIND TO HIM...
TONIGHT YOU DIE, PHIL!
WALTER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY OFFICE?
PHIL! I-WHY, I-I JUST CAME IN TO LEAVE SOME-SOME FIGURES FOR YOU TO GO OVER. THEY-THEY'RE ON YOUR DESK!--
WHY, WALTER DONOVAN! HOW NICE! IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE I LAST SAW YOU. I'VE BEEN MEANING TO VISIT YOU AND CORA--
BUT NOW-I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA! PHIL, WHY DON'T WE HAVE WALTER AND CORA OVER FOR DINNER TONIGHT? CORA AND I USED TO BE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS!
TONIGHT? WHY-OF COURSE, HELEN. I'D ENJOY SEEING CORA AGAIN, TOO, THAT IS, IF WALTER CAN MAKE IT?
DONOVAN STUTTERED, STAMMERED-BUT HOW COULD HE SAY NO? IT WOULD HAVE SEEMED ODD, SUSPICIOUS...
CORA, PLEASE, LET'S GO HOME! I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE TONIGHT WE CAN MAKE IT ANOTHER DAY--
ANOTHER DAY? BUT-WALTER, THE INVITATION WAS FOR TONIGHT? WHATEVER IS WRONG WITH YOU?
5

DONOVAN'S WIFE KNEW WHAT WAS WRONG WITH HIM! BUT HOW COULD HE KNOW THE EAGERNESS INSIDE HER? THE YEARNING TO SEE PHILIP BRONSON DEAD?



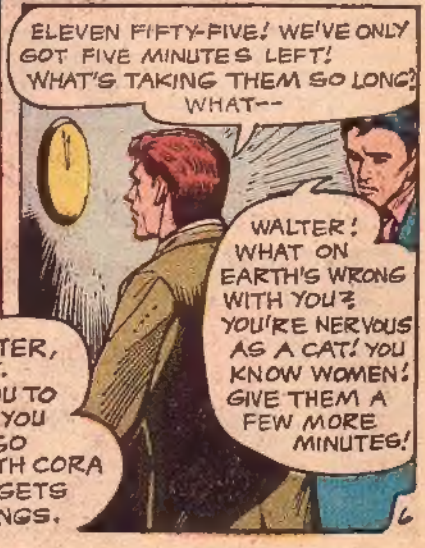

EIGHT-THIRTY! DONOVAN STILL HAD MORE THAN THREE HOURS, THEN! THREE HOURS IN WHICH TO ESCAPE. BUT-THERE WAS NO ESCAPE.
WALTER! OH, WALTER, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN! HELEN SHOWED ME HER THINGS! I NEVER SAW SUCH JEWELRY! AND HER NEW MINK COAT! IT'S JUST HEAVENLY!
I-I KNOW, CORA. I-I-SAW IT THIS AFTERNOON!

THERE WAS NO ESCAPE BECAUSE DONOVAN'S WIFE WOULD NOT LET HIM ESCAPE!
CORA, IT-IT'S GETTING LATE. DON'T YOU THINK WE'D BETTER GO? IT'S PAST ELEVEN--
GO? NONSENSE! WHY, I'M HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME. I WOULDN'T THINK OF LEAVING. AT LEAST NOT YET. NOT UNTIL, SAY-MIDNIGHT?

IT WAS THEN THAT DONOVAN BEGAN TO SUSPECT. HIS WIFE'S SMILE WAS WISE, KNOWING! SHE KNEW! BUT EVEN SO, HE HELD HIS TONGUE! HE STAYED ON-UNTIL THE PANIC WAS A LIVING THING INSIDE HIM...

THERE'S NO TIME TO BE POLITE! PHIL, I-I'M SORRY! BUT WE HAVE TO LEAVE NOW!
AGAIN? REALLY, WALTER, YOU AREN'T A VERY POLITE GUEST--
WHY, OF COURSE, WALTER, IF YOU INSIST. WE'D LOVE YOU TO STAY, BUT IF YOU CAN'T-I'LL GO UPSTAIRS WITH CORA WHILE SHE GETS HER THINGS.

IT WAS AN EFFORT FOR DONOVAN TO CONTROL HIMSELF, THOSE LAST FEW MOMENT HE HELD HIS NERVES TIGHTLY IN CHECK! BUT HE HAD LONG SINCE PASSED HIS BREAKING POINT...

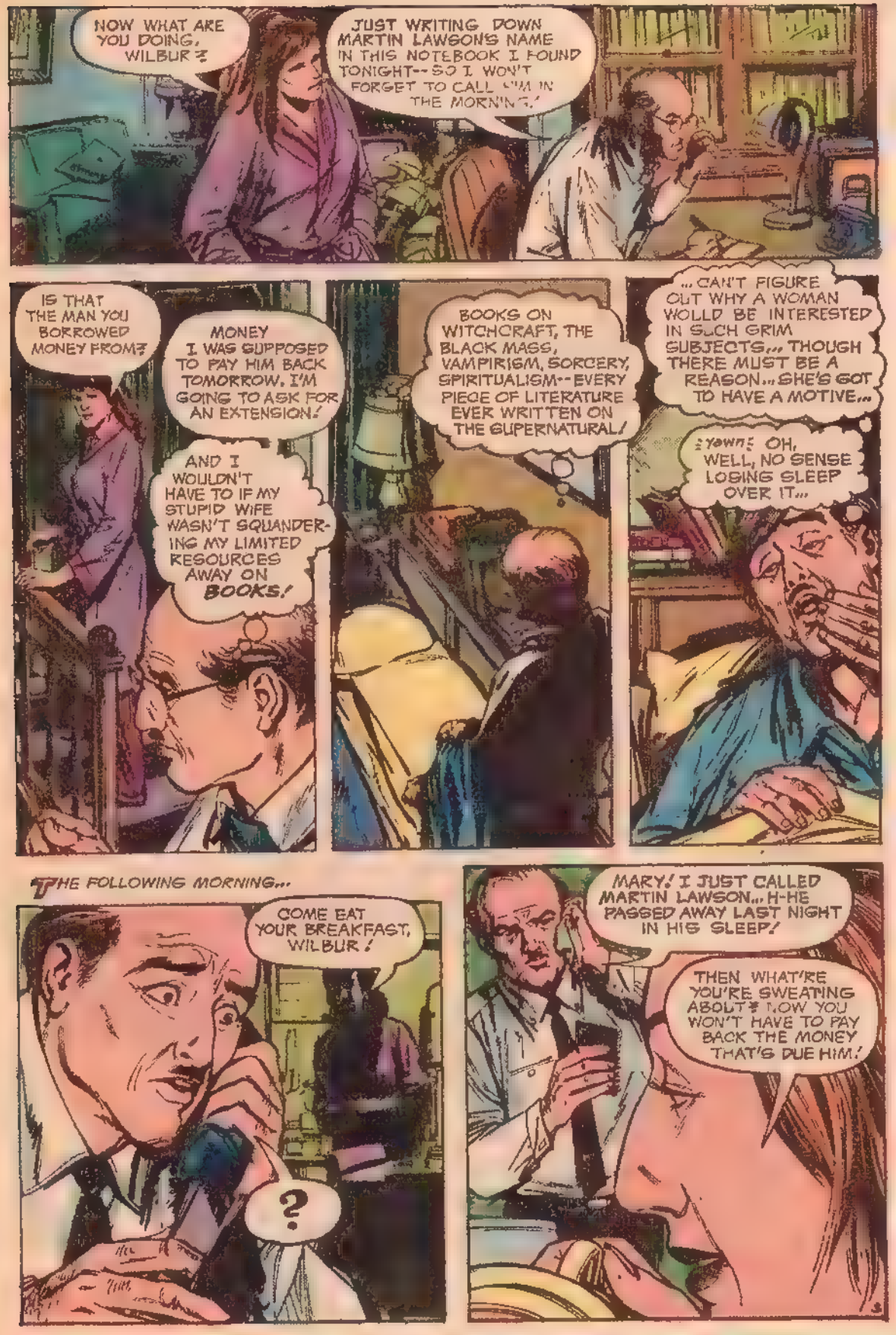

ELEVEN FIFTY-FIVE! WE'VE ONLY GOT FIVE MINUTES LEFT! WHAT'S TAKING THEM SO LONG? WHAT--
WALTER! WHAT ON EARTH'S WRONG WITH YOU? YOU'RE NERVOUS AS A CAT! YOU KNOW WOMEN! GIVE THEM A FEW MORE MINUTES!

NO! WE DON'T HAVE A FEW MORE MINUTES! I'VE GOT TO GET CORA! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!
BONG BONG
NO! THE CLOCK-- CORA! HURRY--
WALTER! WHY-WHAT'S THE MATTER? I WAS JUST TRYING ON HELEN'S NEW MINK COAT. ISN'T IT LOVELY? IT--
YOU KNOW WHAT'S THE MATTER! YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE! YOU WANT TO BE HERE WHEN IT DOES HAPPEN! BUT I DON'T!
WHAT IN-- LOOK! LOOK THERE! WHAT- WHAT IS IT? IT LOOKS LIKE- LIKE A FACE--
IT WAS TOO LATE, THEN. BUT-EVEN THEN, DONOVAN TRIED. HE TRIED TO STOP THE INEVITABLE, TO REGAIN HIS DECENCY--
NO--NO! GET BACK! I'VE CHANGED MY MIND! I'M NOT A MURDERER! GET BACK!
BACK? IT IS TOO LATE-FOR TURNING BACK!
HE TRIED-AND HE FAILED. THE HORROR HE HAD CALLED UP MOVED FORWARD. BUT- NOT TOWARD THE VICTIM WHOM DONOVAN HAD CHOSEN..
AH-H-H--
NO--WALTER! STOP HIM! STOP HIM! TELL HIM THAT I'M NOT THE ONE! TELL HIM--
7

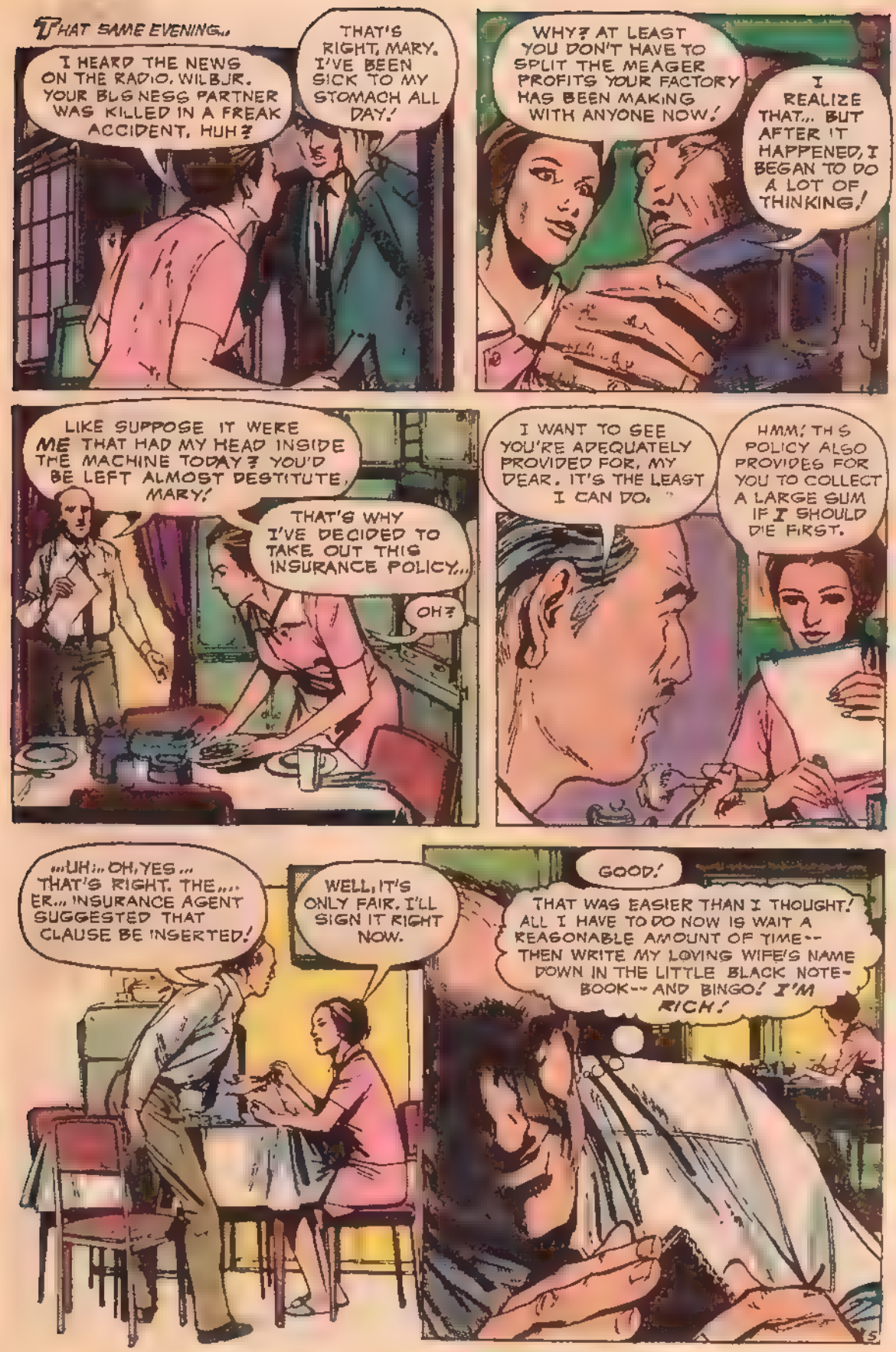
GONE--THAT THING-WHATEVER IT WAS-IT'S GONE! VANISHED!
CORA-NO! OH, DEAR GOD, NO! NO!
DONOVAN'S SENSES BLURRED, THEN. HE SCREAMED HIS GRIEF. BUT HIS GRIEF WAS JUST BEGINNING...
DEAD!--SHE'S DEAD! BUT IT CAN'T BE. I GAVE YOU THE IDOL! THE DEMON CHOSE THE WRONG VICTIM--HOW--
IDOL? THAT LITTLE GOLD THING? THEN-THAT'S WHERE IT CAME FROM! I FOUND IT IN MY POCKET--BUT WHAT HAS THAT TO DO WITH WHAT WE SAW?
POOR, POOR DONOVAN. CORA HAD ALREADY HAD HER PUNISHMENT...BUT WAS MORE FORTUNATE THAN DONOVAN.
IT HAS EVERY-THING TO DO WITH IT! THE IDOL! WHAT DID YOU DO WITH IT? TELL ME!
WALTER, DON'T! I TOOK IT! I WAS GOING TO HAVE IT MADE INTO A CHARM FOR MY CHARM BRACELET! BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
WHAT DIFFERENCE? DONOVAN ALMOST GUESSED THE TRUTH, THEN. BUT HE STILL HAD TO ASK THE QUESTION...
YOU-TOOK IT? AND WHERE IS IT- NOW?
WHERE I PUT IT! I FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT WHEN I CAME HOME THIS AFTERNOON --I--
WALTER, WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES A LITTLE GOLD CHARM MATTER NOW? IF YOU WANT IT, YOU CAN HAVE IT! IT MUST STILL BE IN THE POCKET OF MY COAT!
YOUR COAT? WHAT-COAT?
DONOVAN CROAKED THE WORDS. BUT HE REALLY NEED NOT HAVE BOTHERED. HE ALREADY KNEW-WHAT HIS PUNISH-MENT WAS...
WHY-THAT ONE! MY MINK. CORA INSISTED ON TRYING IT ON! SHE SAID THAT AFTER TONIGHT-SHE'D BE ABLE TO AFFORD ONE JUST LIKE IT!
THE END.

FOR ALMOST A CENTURY IT HAD SHELTERED ONE STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS [illegible]
THEN, A RAGING FIRE [illegible] AND THE ROTTED WOODEN STRUCTURE HAD BEEN DEVOURED BY THE HUNGRY FLAMES [illegible] MINUTES!
THE HOUSE WAS GONE [illegible] A BLACKENED, TWISTED BODY WAS LEFT BEHIND ...THAT, AND SOMETHING ELSE... SOMETHING A CERTAIN MR. WILBUR WAGHBURN WAS [illegible] TO RECOVER...
OVER HERE MEN! I THINK I'VE FOUND HIS BODY!
SPECTER'S NOTEBOOK
BY JOHN ALCOCK

SHEESH! NOT MUCH LEFT OF HIM IS THERE?
Y'KNOW, A LOT OF FOLKS ARE GOING TO BE GLAD HIM AND HIS CREEPY HOUSE ARE GONE!
AND I'M ONE OF THEM! THOSE REMAINS YOU SEE THERE AREN'T HUMAN! THAT CREATURE WAS IN LEAGUE WITH THE DEVIL--IT WAS PROVIDENCE THAT DESTROYED HIM AND HIS EVIL!
WHAT'S THIS?
LOOKS LIKE A NOTEBOOK, WILBUR.
SOME OF THE PAGES HAVE BEEN TORN OUT--ALL THE OTHERS ARE BLANK.
WELL, I'LL KEEP IT IN CASE I RUN INTO ANY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN WHO MIGHT WANT TO GIVE ME THEIR TELEPHONE NUMBERS!
BETTER NOT LET YOUR WIFE FIND IT THEN, OR YOU'LL BE JOINING OUR FRIEND HERE!
SOME TIME LATER...
SO! YOU FINALLY REMEMBERED YOU HAD A HOME, HUH MR. WILBUR WASHBURN?
I'M A VOLUNTEER FIREMAN, MARY...
...IT'S MY CIVIC DUTY TO ANSWER ALARMS!
FREE LABOR, THAT'S WHAT IT IS! THE TOWN SHOULD PAY YOU MEN FOR RISKING YOUR LIVES!


NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING, WILBUR?
JUST WRITING DOWN MARTIN LAWSON'S NAME IN THIS NOTEBOOK I FOUND TONIGHT--SO I WON'T FORGET TO CALL HIM IN THE MORNING.
IS THAT THE MAN YOU BORROWED MONEY FROM?
MONEY I WAS SUPPOSED TO PAY HIM BACK TOMORROW. I'M GOING TO ASK FOR AN EXTENSION.
AND I WOULDN'T HAVE TO IF MY STUPID WIFE WASN'T SQUANDERING MY LIMITED RESOURCES AWAY ON BOOKS!
BOOKS ON WITCHCRAFT, THE BLACK MASS, VAMPIRISM, SORCERY, SPIRITUALISM--EVERY PIECE OF LITERATURE EVER WRITTEN ON THE SUPERNATURAL!
...CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY A WOMAN WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SUCH GRIM SUBJECTS... THOUGH THERE MUST BE A REASON... SHE'S GOT TO HAVE A MOTIVE...
:yawn: OH, WELL, NO SENSE LOSING SLEEP OVER IT...
THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
COME EAT YOUR BREAKFAST, WILBUR!
?
MARY! I JUST CALLED MARTIN LAWSON... H-HE PASSED AWAY LAST NIGHT IN HIS SLEEP!
THEN WHAT'RE YOU'RE SWEATING ABOUT? NOW YOU WON'T HAVE TO PAY BACK THE MONEY THAT'S DUE HIM!

WILBUR! I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING! YOU WROTE MARTIN'S NAME IN THAT LITTLE BLACK BOOK YOU FOUND! MAYBE IT HAS SOME SORT OF DEADLY MAGICAL POWERS!
YOU'D BETTER QUIT READING THOSE DUMB BOOKS ON WITCHCRAFT, MARY, OR THEY'LL BE CARTING YOU OFF TO SOME MENTAL INSTITUTION!
JUST BECAUSE THE NOTEBOOK BELONGED TO A MAN REPUTED TO BE A WARLOCK, SHE THINKS—
...THOUGH I WONDER...
WHY NOT? IT'S A MILLION-TO-ONE SHOT, BUT WHILE I'M WAITING FOR THAT TRAFFIC LIGHT TO CHANGE, I'LL JUST JOT DOWN DONALD CORSEN'S NAME ON ONE OF THE PAGES...
SHORTLY...
...THEN, IF EVER THERE WAS SOMETHING TO THIS NOTEBOOK HAVING MYSTIC POWERS, I'D BECOME THE SOLE OWNER OF—
WASHBURN
EEK!
LUCY! WHAT'S WRONG?
-MR. CORSEN-- H-HE WAS TRYING TO REPAIR THE MACHINE I WAS WORKING ON--
:SOB: HE HAD HIS HEAD INSIDE THE CUTTING MECHANISM WHEN SUDDENLY THE SAFETY DEVICE SNAPPED!
IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD-?
GREAT SCOTT! THE NOTEBOOK! IT HAS THE POWER OF DEATH!


THAT SAME EVENING...
I HEARD THE NEWS ON THE RADIO, WILBUR. YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER WAS KILLED IN A FREAK ACCIDENT, HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT, MARY. I'VE BEEN SICK TO MY STOMACH ALL DAY.
WHY? AT LEAST YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPLIT THE MEAGER PROFITS YOUR FACTORY HAS BEEN MAKING WITH ANYONE NOW!
I REALIZE THAT... BUT AFTER IT HAPPENED, I BEGAN TO DO A LOT OF THINKING!
LIKE SUPPOSE IT WERE ME THAT HAD MY HEAD INSIDE THE MACHINE TODAY? YOU'D BE LEFT ALMOST DESTITUTE, MARY!
THAT'S WHY I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE OUT THIS INSURANCE POLICY...
OH?
I WANT TO SEE YOU'RE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED FOR, MY DEAR. IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO.
HMM! THIS POLICY ALSO PROVIDES FOR YOU TO COLLECT A LARGE SUM IF I SHOULD DIE FIRST.
...UH... OH, YES... THAT'S RIGHT. THE... ER... INSURANCE AGENT SUGGESTED THAT CLAUSE BE INSERTED!
WELL, IT'S ONLY FAIR. I'LL SIGN IT RIGHT NOW.
GOOD!
THAT WAS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT! ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW IS WAIT A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME-- THEN WRITE MY LOVING WIFE'S NAME DOWN IN THE LITTLE BLACK NOTE-BOOK-- AND BINGO! I'M RICH!
5

BUT LATER THAT NIGHT...
NO! NO! I WON'T DO IT! I WON'T DO IT!
WILBUR! WAKE UP! WHAT THE DEVIL'S WRONG WITH YOU?
...HUH...OH..! ...NOTHING, MARY... I WAS HAVING A BAD DREAM..
WHAT KIND OF A DREAM?
NEVER MIND! GO BACK TO SLEEP AND LEAVE ME ALONE!
WASN'T REALLY A DREAM ANYWAY--IT WAS A NIGHTMARE...
I SAW MARY, DRESSED IN SOME KIND OF A DEMON'S COSTUME... AND SHE WAS CASTING AN EVIL SPELL OVER ME ...MADE ME WRITE MY NAME IN THE LITTLE BLACK NOTEBOOK... THEN, AFTERWARD SHE BURNED THE NOTEBOOK!
...SHE'S BEEN STUDYING SORCERY... READING ALL THAT WEIRD LITERATURE... SUPPOSING SHE WAS WISE TO ME... KNEW HOW I WAS PLANNING TO DO HER IN...
WHEW! IT WAS ALL A BAD DREAM!
I DIDN'T WRITE MY NAME IN THAT NOTEBOOK AND SHE DIDN'T BURN IF AFTERWARD... IT'S STILL RIGHT HERE IN IN THE POCKET OF MY PAJAMAS JUST WHERE I LEFT-
...HUH? ...IT'S G-GONE!
-AND WHAT'S THAT SMOLDERING OVER THERE IN THE ASH— OH, NO!
...I'M... I'M... DOOMED!
END

Dear Editor:

I just finished reading Dark Mansion number six. Congratulations on your format change. The book needed it. The stories were both good. The Kirby story was one I really liked, though. But I must ask a question. Was "The Psychic-Bloodhound" originally done by Kirby for the never-published second issue of Spirit World?

The second story was weak in spots. I think another writer might have been better suited for it, like Len Wein or Bob Kanigher. Jose Delbo did pretty good illustrations, though. All in all a good issue. Keep up the good work.

Steve Clement
Pawtucket, R.I.

Dear Steve:

The history behind that particular issue of Dark Mansion was an interesting one which may interest some of you readers. Originally set for the issue was a full-length Gothic story. However, when National decided to reduce the price of our comics from 25c to 20c, it was also decided to do away with the full-length stories. The reason was simply that most readers preferred several short stories to one long one.

An issue had to be put together quickly. There wasn't enough time to create an entire book, but, at the same time, we just didn't want to slop together something. We wouldn't be proud of it, and you readers wouldn't care for it either.

Then we hit upon it. There was a second issue of Spirit World in the drawer. Top flight material—and a story that no one had ever seen before Certainly this would be welcomed by all Kirby fans, and at the same time, fans of the supernatural. We included the Kirby story. Then we began searching for a second story. All other Kirby material was slated for our new mystery title, Weird Mystery Tales, so we couldn't use another. We then checked with our editors and asked if any had a story we could use in this emergency. We checked the files, looking for a tale that would fit the format of Dark Mansion . . . a tale that had the Gothic feeling our early issues had but also the touch of horror our future issues would present. Then we found it, the Mike Friedrich Jose Delbo tale you fans read.

Now, who says National doesn't tell it like it is?

* * * * *

Dear Joe:

At the end of "Diary of a Dead Woman" you ask the readers to give you the verdict on what happened.

Well, I believe the man was really the devil and that he wanted to lure the girl into marrying him so he would have a companion to help him with his devilish work. I think that she should know that he is the devil because of the weird things he did.

I think it was good the way she treated her husband. I don't think she would have married this man for love, but for money, and the thought of him being handsome. But to me he was the ugliest thing that could ever have been put into your mag.

Name Lost
Woodville, Miss.

Dear Name

You are probably right about our little Miss . . . and about the man she married Wait till you see their kid . . . the little devil

Dear Joe:

A Lettercol, please. A comic without a lettercol is like swimming without water. So how about it?

I did like the near realism of the first few covers of this magazine, but now that the covers have reverted to the type found on most comics, Alan Weiss' cover to FTDM #6 could hardly be beat.

I was surprised that you didn't credit "The Psychic Bloodhound", yet, of course, you didn't need to. It was obviously the work of Jack Kirby and Mike Royer. Naturally it was a masterpiece. I noticed that Mike Royer keeps right on improving on facial features. Great going, gang.

Friedrich and Delbo also did a good job on "Diary of a Dead Woman."

Actually, I was a little disappointed with this issue. Although both tales were good, I prefer the gothic horror this magazine usually features, and I hope to see more of it next issue.

Mark Lucke
Beeville, Texas

* * * * *

Dear Joe,

I like Kirby, but he is appearing in almost every magazine of D.C. He has his own seven billion mags, and now is in Dark Mansion and Weird Mystery. Give the poor guy a break. He only has two arms . . . doesn't he?

His story was good, and very spooky. I did like it very much. Which is more than I can say about the second feature. Friedrich is not a writer. Rather he is a hack. Or should I say he is a fan writer who should go back to writing letter columns. He was best in them.

Jose Delbo is very good, and it was only he who saved the second story. The art was excellent, and I only wish Delbo did more work for you people. He is never great, but he is always enjoyable, and that is all I ask from any comic story—script and art.

I read that Joe Orlando is taking over Dark Mansion. Thank God, I say. Now we will have good stories and art every issue. I think if I ever see another story by Don Heck, I'll scream.

Jose Pascal
Tyler, Texas

Dear Jose:

At least we hope every issue will have great art and stories. So far we're batting a thousand in what we are presenting. Now it is up to you readers to keep buying the book.

* * * * *

Dear Joe:

NO! NO! NO!

Give me back the full length Gothic mystery stories, or I'll come down to your office and beat you all up.

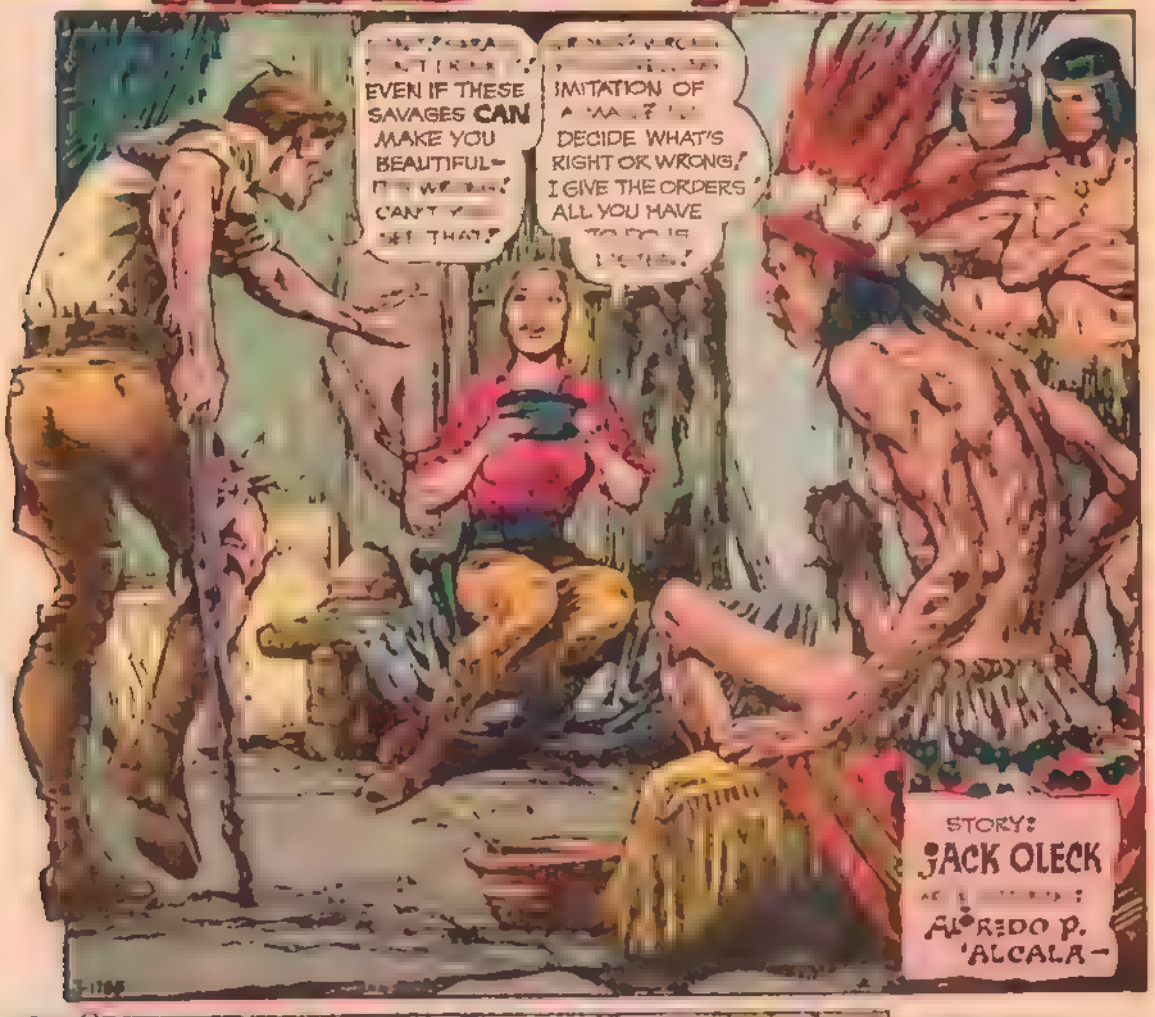
Mary Richardson
Mobile, Ala

Dear Mary:

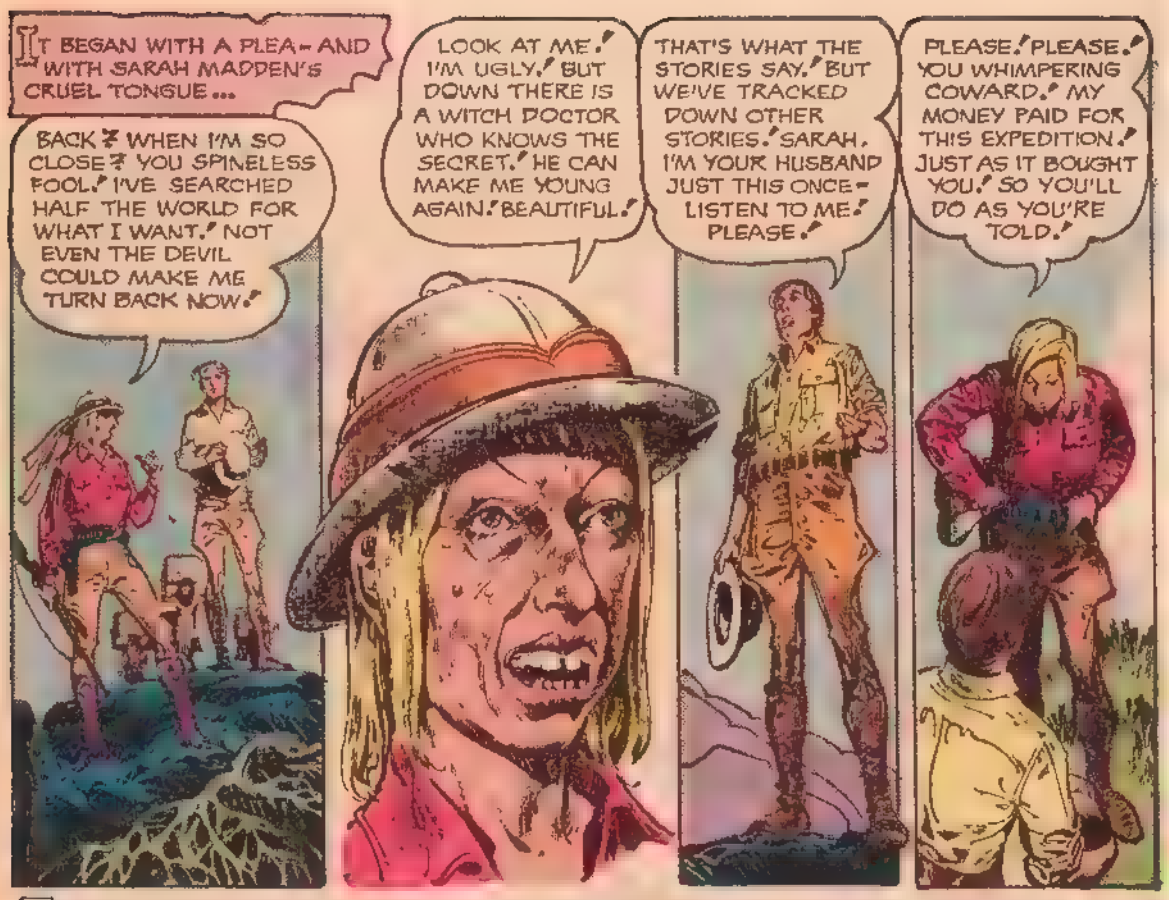
Please don't come down. Read this issue, and we think you'll begin to like the shorties as much as the long stories. And then you can write to us at: Through The Keyhole Of The Dark Mansion, c/o National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10022.

SARAH MADISON ORS[illegible] WAS [illegible] TO MAKE HER TURN BACK. BUT [illegible] WAS A WILL AS STRONG AS HER OWN. AND SHE WAS...

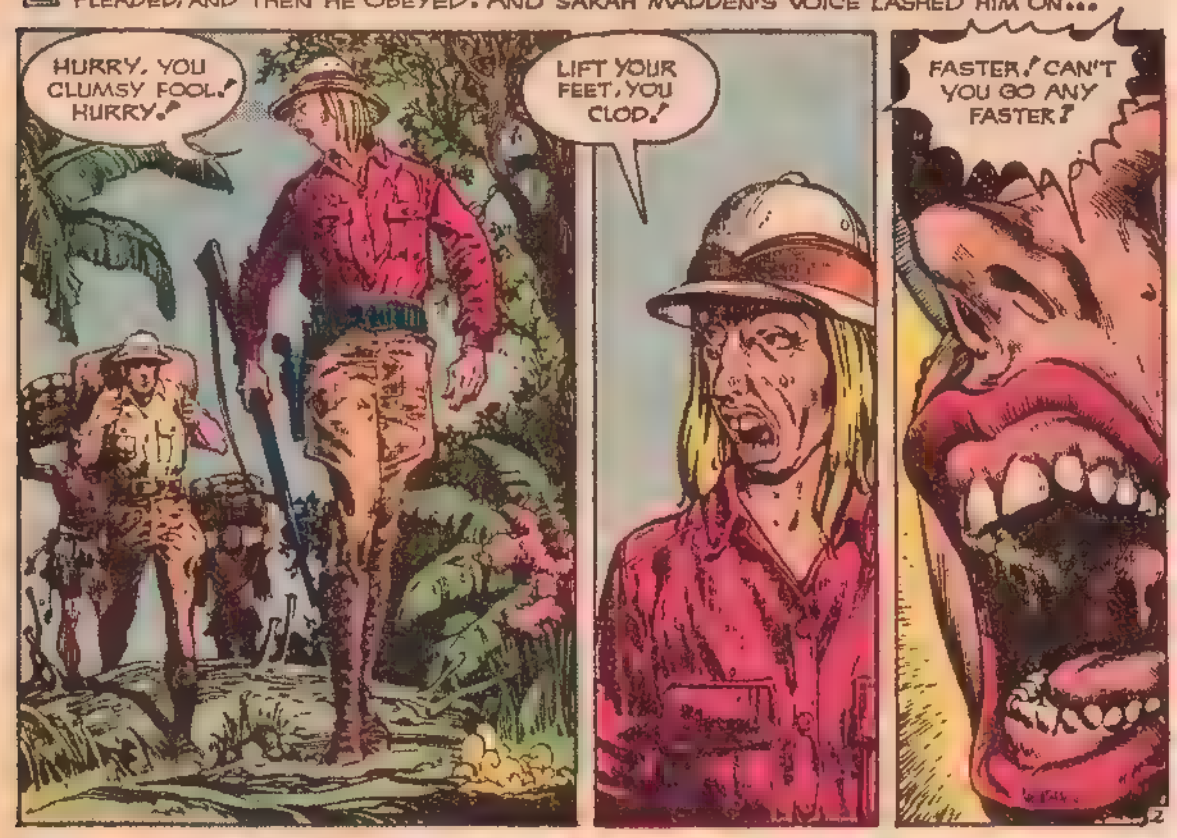
THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE

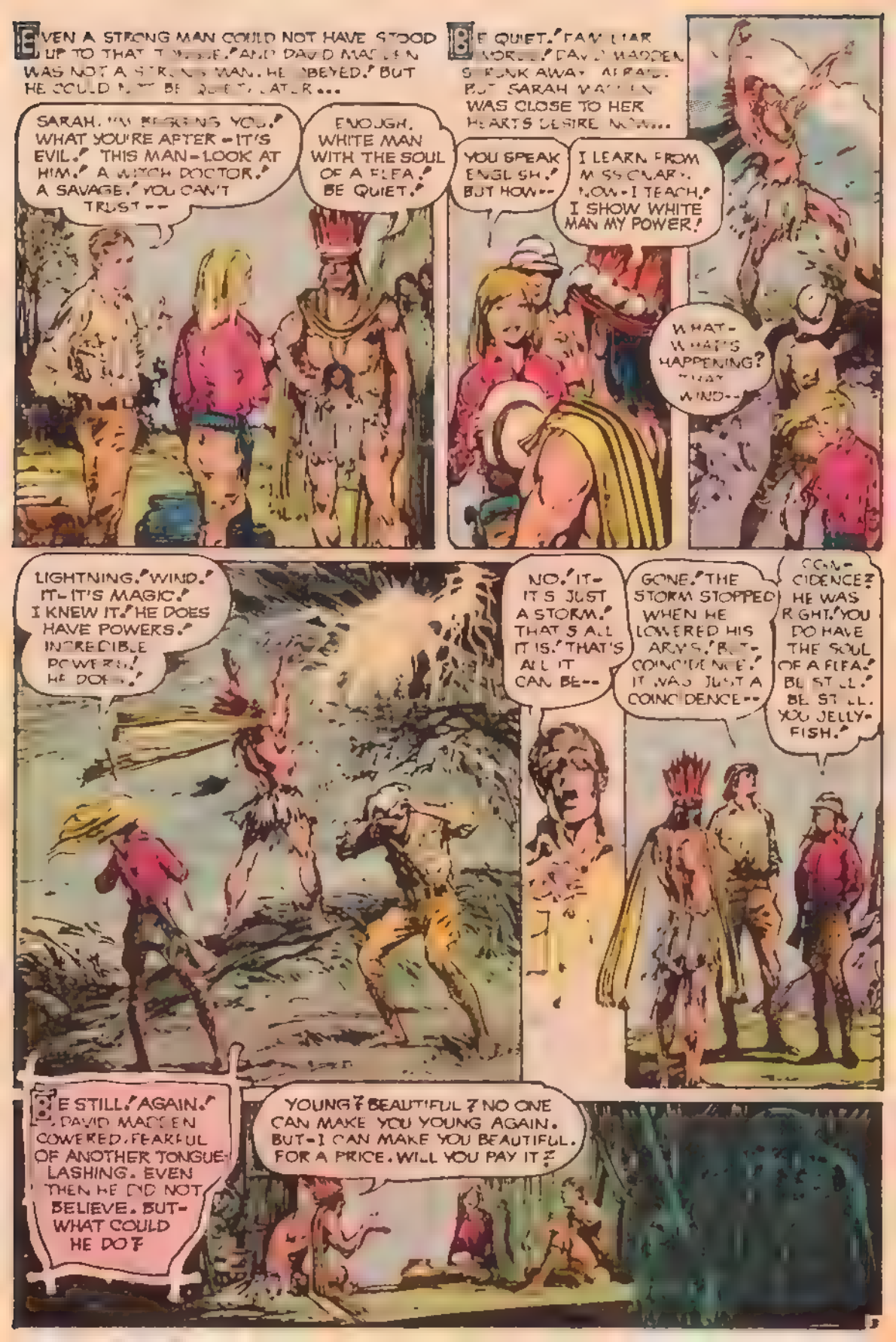

EVEN IF THESE SAVAGES CAN MAKE YOU BEAUTIFUL— [illegible] CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?
IMITATION OF A [illegible] DECIDE WHAT'S RIGHT OR WRONG! I GIVE THE ORDERS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS [illegible]!
STORY: JACK OLECK
ART: ALFREDO P. ALCALA

THEY TELL OF IT EVEN TODAY ALONG THE AMAZON— BECAUSE HORROR IS NOT EASILY FORGOTTEN. IT BEGAN LONG YEARS AGO— WITH A PLEA...
SARAH, IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN! THIS THING YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR IS MADNESS! WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK! THOSE INDIANS ARE JIVAROS! KILLERS!


IT BEGAN WITH A PLEA - AND WITH SARAH MADDEN'S CRUEL TONGUE...
BACK? WHEN I'M SO CLOSE? YOU SPINELESS FOOL! I'VE SEARCHED HALF THE WORLD FOR WHAT I WANT! NOT EVEN THE DEVIL COULD MAKE ME TURN BACK NOW!
LOOK AT ME! I'M UGLY! BUT DOWN THERE IS A WITCH DOCTOR WHO KNOWS THE SECRET! HE CAN MAKE ME YOUNG AGAIN! BEAUTIFUL!
THAT'S WHAT THE STORIES SAY! BUT WE'VE TRACKED DOWN OTHER STORIES! SARAH, I'M YOUR HUSBAND JUST THIS ONCE - LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE!
PLEASE! PLEASE! YOU WHIMPERING COWARD! MY MONEY PAID FOR THIS EXPEDITION! JUST AS IT BOUGHT YOU! SO YOU'LL DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

DO AS YOU'RE TOLD! HOW OFTEN HAD DAVID MADDEN HEARD THOSE WORDS! HE PLEADED, AND THEN HE OBEYED. AND SARAH MADDEN'S VOICE LASHED HIM ON...




EVEN A STRONG MAN COULD NOT HAVE STOOD UP TO THAT TONGUE-LASHING. AND DAVID MADDEN WAS NOT A STRONG MAN. HE OBEYED. BUT HE COULD NOT BE QUIET LATER...
SARAH, I'M BEGGING YOU. WHAT YOU'RE AFTER - IT'S EVIL. THIS MAN - LOOK AT HIM. A WITCH DOCTOR. A SAVAGE. YOU CAN'T TRUST --
ENOUGH, WHITE MAN WITH THE SOUL OF A FLEA. BE QUIET.
BE QUIET. FAN LIAR NOW. DAVID MADDEN SLUNK AWAY AFRAID. BUT SARAH MADDEN WAS CLOSE TO HER HEART'S DESIRE NOW...
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH. BUT HOW --
I LEARN FROM MISSIONARY. NOW - I TEACH. I SHOW WHITE MAN MY POWER!
WHAT - WHAT'S HAPPENING? WIND --
LIGHTNING. WIND. IT - IT'S MAGIC. I KNEW IT. HE DOES HAVE POWERS. INCREDIBLE POWERS. HE DOES.
NO. IT - IT'S JUST A STORM. THAT'S ALL IT IS. THAT'S ALL IT CAN BE --
GONE. THE STORM STOPPED WHEN HE LOWERED HIS ARMS. BUT - COINCIDENCE. IT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE --
COINCIDENCE? HE WAS RIGHT. YOU DO HAVE THE SOUL OF A FLEA. BE STILL. BE STILL. YOU JELLYFISH.
BE STILL. AGAIN. DAVID MADDEN COWERED, FEARFUL OF ANOTHER TONGUE-LASHING. EVEN THEN HE DID NOT BELIEVE. BUT - WHAT COULD HE DO?
YOUNG? BEAUTIFUL? NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU YOUNG AGAIN. BUT - I CAN MAKE YOU BEAUTIFUL. FOR A PRICE. WILL YOU PAY IT?

PRICE? YES! YES, I'LL PAY ANYTHING! ANYTHING! ALL THE MONEY YOU WANT--
NO. YOUR MONEY MEANS NOTHING IN THE JUNGLE. BUT-YOU HAVE GUNS AND WE HAVE ONLY BOWS AND SPEARS.
FOR YEARS WE HAVE BEEN AT WAR WITH A TRIBE DOWNRIVER. HELP US! HELP US TO WIPE THEM OUT- AND I WILL DO AS YOU ASK!
HELP! HE MEANS MURDER! SARAH, YOU CAN'T! YOU CAN'T KILL IN COLD BLOOD! YOU CAN'T!
ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF BEING BEAUTIFUL! DO YOU THINK I'LL LET YOU STOP ME NOW? DO YOU?
I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOU! TO SAVE YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL! NO! SARAH - YOU WOULDN'T--
I WON'T LET YOU! I'LL GO BACK TO CIVILIZATION! I'LL BRING THE AUTHORITIES! I'LL--
WILL YOU, DAVID? YES - I THINK YOU MIGHT. AS COWARDLY AS YOU ARE - YOU JUST MIGHT. BUT - DO YOU REALLY THINK I'D LET YOU?
BLAM!
NOW - YOU'LL STAY! UNTIL I'M READY TO LEAVE!
COWARD! INGRATE! MY MONEY HAS GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING! BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD GRATITUDE, DO YOU? COWARD! WEAKLING!

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT- SARAH MADDEN WAS MAD.' MAD WITH HER DREAM.' BUT THAT DID NOT STOP HER TONGUE...

SARAH MADDEN'S TONGUE SHREDDED HER HUSBAND'S EGO. DEMOLISHED HIS PRIDE. HIS SOUL WAS IN AGONY. AND YET HE COULD DO NO MORE THAN WATCH. AFTERWARD...

DAVID MADDEN COULD ONLY WAIT, HELPLESS. AND SO HE DID NOT SEE WHAT HAPPENED A FEW MILES DOWNRIVER THAT DAY...

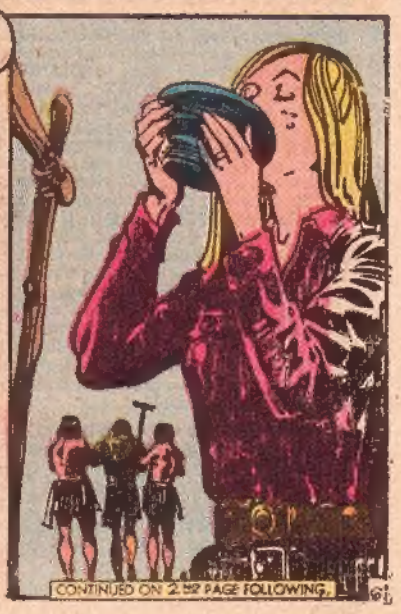
HOW MANY MEN DIED THAT DAY - NO ONE CAN SAY. SARAH MADDEN DID NOT KNOW - AND SHE DID NOT CARE. SHE WAS SO CLOSE, NOW...

TOMORROW! TOMORROW, THE MONSTROUS THING WOULD BE DONE! DAVID MADDEN RACKED HIS BRAIN THAT NIGHT. THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO STOP THIS EVIL. BUT...

SARAH! YOU DIDN'T - YOU DIDN'T KILL--
I DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE! LEAVE ME ALONE! I'M TIRED. I'M GOING TO SLEEP. I WANT TO BE FRESH FOR THE CEREMONY TOMORROW.

BUT - SARAH MADDEN HAD KNOWN THAT DAVID MADDEN MIGHT TRY...

FOOL! DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D LET YOU INTERFERE? I KNEW THAT YOU'D TRY TO CHEAT ME OF MY CHANCE TO BE BEAUTIFUL! BUT NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW! NOTHING!



ONE LAST TIME, SARAH MADDEN'S TONGUE RIPPED AT HER HUSBAND. THEN...

AH-H-H--

THEN SARAH MADDEN WAS IN ANOTHER WORLD. A WORLD OF SHADOWS...

SARAH MADDEN KNEW THAT TIME PASSED. SHE KNEW THAT HANDS TOUCHED HER. BUT THE REST WAS STRANGE, TWISTED...

FACES HOVERED IN SPACE, ACRID SMOKE STUNG HER NOSTRILS - AND THEN THERE WAS DARKNESS AND AFTER THE DARKNESS...

SMILING--THEY'RE SMILING--ADMIRING ME--THEN-THEY'VE DONE IT.' I'M BEAUTIFUL-BEAUTIFUL--

IT WAS DONE AND SARAH MADDEN WAS CONTENT. SHE SLEPT. AND WHEN SHE AWAKENED...
SARAH.' THEY SAID I COULD SEE YOU NOW.' THEY--
SARAH.'
WHEN SHE AWAKENED, HER HUSBAND WAS THERE. BUT HE DID NOT SMILE. AND FOR THAT, SHE TRIED AGAIN TO LASH HIM WITH HER TONGUE...
NO.' SARAH- DON'T.' DON'T TRY TO SPEAK.' IT- IT'S NO USE.'
SHE TRIED - AND COULD NOT.' AND SHE DID NOT KNOW WHY - UNTIL HER HUSBAND BROUGHT HER HER MIRROR...
THAT WAS WHEN SHE KNEW. THAT WAS WHEN SHE UNDERSTOOD AT LAST. SHE HAD WON.' THE INDIANS HAD MADE HER BEAUTIFUL.'
BUT - BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER! THEY HAD MADE HER BEAUTIFUL - AS THEY SAW BEAUTY. AND THE WORST OF IT WAS - SHE COULDN'T EVEN SCREAM.'
d'END
8